

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
----- 071648

P 011255Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6590

INFO USMISSION USUN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 4714

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP

SUBJECT: SAHARA: CLOSER TO DENOUEMENT

REF: MADRID 6615; RABAT 4530; RABAT 4625; ALGIERS 2093

1. SUMMARY: WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE INDICATIONS THAT GOM INCREASING READINESS OF ITS ARMED FORCES AND MAY USE THEM IF ITS OTHER CURRENT APPROACHES FAIL. WHILE GOM APPARENTLY STILL HOPES FOR NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WITH SPAIN AND DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS CONTINUE, MOOD HERE IS GROWING INCREASINGLY PESSIMISTIC REGARDING PROSPECTS THAT GOM WILL FIND WAY OUT ESCHEWING SOME RESORT TO MILITARY OPTION. LIKELY INITIAL MILITARY STEPS WOULD BE GUERRILLA ACTIVITY, BUT THAT COULD ESCALATE RAPIDLY IF EVENTS GOT OUT OF HAND. AS FOR U.S. ROLE, WE SUPPORT CONTINUATION OF OUR PRESENT POLICY OF STRICT NEUTRALITY. END SUMMARY.

2. DIPLOMATIC OR MILITARY SOLUTION? OUR REPORTING OF LATE ON SAHARA HAS POINTED TO CONFLUENCE OF EVENTS OF WHICH TIMING GOVERNED LARGELY BY UNGA/ICJ PROCESSES AND KING'S SELF-IMPOSED YEAR-END DEADLINE FOR RESOLVING MATTER. AS SOME REFTELS NOTE, MILITARY ASPECTS OF GOM ACTIVITIES HAVE INCREASINGLY SERIOUS OVERTONES, AND CHANCES OF ARMED CONFLICT AT SOME POINT

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OVER SAHARA HAVE INCREASED. HOW LIKELY, BETWEEN WHOM, WHEN,

AND AT WHAT LEVEL OF VIOLENCE ARE ALL STILL MATTERS OF CONJECTURE. WHILE WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT GOM WISHES TO ACHIEVE ITS ENDS IF AT ALL FEASIBLE WITHOUT RECOURSE TO FORCE, AND THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS WITH SPAIN, EVENTS COULD LEAD TO ITS RESORTING TO VARIOUS LEVELS OF VIOLENCE. OUR FEELING IS THAT SUCH ACTION WOULD MOST PROBABLY TAKE THE FORM OF GUERRILLA ACTIVITY AGAINST SPANISH, AND PERHAPS F POLISARIO, TARGETS TO START WITH. SCENARIOS LEADING FROM THAT, HOWEVER, ARE NUMEROUS AND SPECULATIVE. THEY COULD COME TO ENCOMPASS LARGER UNIT CLASHES, ALGERIAN INVOLVEMENT, U.S. ARMS, AND -- INEVITABLY -- INCREASED PRESSURE FROM BOTH SPAIN AND MOROCCO FOR A U.S. ROLE.

3. FROM HERE, IT SEEMS WORST CASE SCENARIO COULD OCCUR IF DIMINISHING SPANISH PRESENCE WERE ACCOMPANIED BY SIGNS OF MOVEMENT BY SPANISH SAHARA INDEPENDENCE GROUPS TOWARDS UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. WE BELIEVE SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD ENTIAL HIGH LIKELIHOOD OF GOM INITIATING SOME KIND OF MILITARY ACTIVITY AND THIS IS THE PRIMARY CIRCUMSTANCE WE SEE WHERE GOM MIGHT EVEN BE WILLING TO TAKE ON SPANISH DIRECTLY. IF ICJ OPINION DISPUTES GOM CLAIMS TO SOVEREIGNTY, SOME MILITARY RESPONSE BY GOM LIKEWISE PREDICTABLE. IN THIS CONNECTION, THERE ARE INTERNAL PRESSURES (WHICH THE KING HAS TO SOME EXTENT GENERATED HIMSELF) WHICH ARE BOUND TO PUSH HIM TOWARD GREATER ACTIVISM. HE COULD PROBABLY HANDLE AN OUTCRY BY POLITICAL OPPOSITION GROUPS TO ANY DIPLOMATIC FAILURE, BUT THE MILITARY REMAIN AN UNKNOWN FACTOR.

4. AT SAME TIME, POSSIBILITIES FOR COMPROMISE BETWEEN SPAIN AND MOROCCO, THE TWO MAJOR CONTENDERS, STILL EXIST IN OUR VIEW. WE HAVE HEARD THAT KING TOLD POLITICAL LEADERS WHO CALLED ON HIM URGING IMMEDIATE MILITARY ACTION (RABAT 4625) THAT HE WILL AWAIT ICJ OPINION. GOM ACTIVE ON OTHER NON-MILITARY FRONTS, BOTH ABROAD AND IN SAHARA ITSELF. LARAKI-CORTINA CONTACTS IN NEW YORK ONE OF NUMBER OF SIGNS THAT PARTIES STILL TRYING TO TALK. LOCAL PRESS REPORTS TRAVEL TO EDYPT BY GOM INTELLIGENCE CHIEF DLIMI, WHO OFTEN USED ON SAHARA DIPLOMACY. WE ALSO TAKE OCCASION TO RECALL KING'S JULY REMARKS TO DEPSECDEF CLEMENTS TO EFFECT THAT GOM EXERTING MAJOR EFFORT TO SUBORN SAHARA INDEPENDENCE GROUPS (RABAT 3360 NOTAL) AND CONSIDER IT PROBABLE THAT SUCH EFFORTS CONTINUE ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO WAY OF

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ASSESSING LIKELIHOOD OF THEIR SUCCESS. GIVEN THIS PICTURE, WE JUDGE CURRENT DIPLOMATIC FRONT TO BE IN FLUID STATE.

5. ICJ OPINION AND MANEUVERING IN UN. NO MATTER WHAT ICJ OPINION SAYS, IT SEEMS TO US QUESTIONABLE WHETHER ALL PARTIES WILL AGREE ON AND/OR ACCEPT TERMS OF ITS CONCLUSIONS. COMPLEX DIPLOMATIC MANEUVERING OVER A UNGA RESOLUTION CAN BE EXPECTED -- AND THERE MAY BE SOME DIFFICULT CHOICES FOR U.S. A SPANISH

REQUEST, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR UN SUPERVISION OF REFERENDUM OR  
EVEN UN GUARANTEES FOR ITS FORCES DURING WITHDRAWAL WOULD  
PROBABLY BE RESISTED BY GOM. SPAIN HAS HINTED THAT IT MIGHT  
PLACE MATTER BEFORE SECURITY COUNCIL IF SITUATION IN  
SAHARA "DETERIORATES" (STATE 228186).  
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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
----- 072141

P 011255Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6591

INFO USMISSION USUN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 RABAT 4714

EXDIS

6. AN INDEPENDENT SAHARA. QUESTION OF HOW USG SHOULD VIEW  
POSSIBILITY OF CREATION INDEPENDENT SAHARA HAS BEEN RAISED  
BEFORE AND WE HAVE MADE KNOWN OUR VIEWS (RABAT 2374). SUBJECT  
OF VIABILITY SUCH AN ENTITY HAS BEEN TREATED ADMIRABLY IN  
MADRID 4062 AND KEY QUESTION -- THAT OF SECURITY -- RIGHTLY  
POSED. WE DO NOT FEEL IT IN U.S. INTEREST TO SEE CREATED IN  
REGION A STATE WHOSE EXISTENCE WOULD INEVITABLY GENERATE  
CONTENTION AND POSE SECURITY PROBLEMS -- ALTHOUGH MOROCCAN/  
MAURITANIAN ABSORPTION OF THIS TERRITORY WOULD BY NO MEANS  
FREE IT ENTIRELY FROM SUBSEQUENT CONTENTION BY BOTH INTERNAL  
AND EXTERNAL INTERESTS. PUTTING ASIDE FOR MOMENT TERMS OF  
EVENTUAL ICJ ADVISORY OPINION, AND DESPITE SOME POSSIBLE  
ECONOMIC POLICY RESERVATIONS OVER SUBSTANTIAL NEW PHOSPHATE  
MARKETING POWER THAT WOULD ACCRUE TO AN ENLARGED MOROCCO,  
PURELY PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF MATTER LEAD US TO CONCLUDE THAT  
MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER SAHARA PREFERABLE TO  
AN INDEPENDENT STATE OF QUESTIONABLE LONGEVITY AND OPEN TO  
OUTSIDE INFLUENCES POTENTIALLY INIMICAL TO U.S.

7. AMERICAN ARMS. U.S. ARMS ISSUE COULD ADD ANOTHER DIMENSION, AS EMBASSY MADRID NOTES. QUESTION IS NOT IMMEDIATE IN SOUTH, HOWEVER, WHERE MOROCCAN FORCES NOW HEAVILY RELIANT ON ARMS PROCURED FROM SOVIET AND TO LESSER EXTENT FRENCH SOURCES. KEY FACTOR HERE IS THAT WITH EXCEPTION OF FEWER THAN  
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20 OPERATIONAL F-5S US-PROVIDED HEAVY WEAPONS EITHER NOT YET IN COUNTRY, OR NOT YET OPERATIONAL AND NOT EXPECTED TO BE SO IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE. A MAJOR IMPACT OF FIGHTING IN SOUTH WOULD BE INCREASED GOM RELIANCE ON SOVIET WEAPONRY.

8. U.S. ROLE. PRESSURE FOR A MORE PROMINENT U.S. ROLE IS LIKELY TO INCREASE. WHILE DEPARTMENT CAN BEST ASSESS THIS ISSUE, WE IN RABAT COULD NOT AGREE MORE WITH STATEMENT IN PARA 6 OF MADRID 6615 TO EFFECT THAT OUR POSTURE OVER SAHARA IN COMING DAYS WILL HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR RELATIONS WITH BOTH COUNTRIES. SAHARA IS MOROCCO'S CENTRAL FOREIGN POLICY ISSUE. ANY U.S. IDENTIFICATION WITH MOVES TO THWART MOROCCAN SAHARA CAMPAIGN -- WHICH IS FAR MORE OF A GUT TERRITORIAL ISSUE FOR MOROCCANS THAN FOR EITHER SPAIN OR ALGERIA -- WOULD BE BOUND TO HAVE INTENSE AND LONG-TERM ADVERSE IMPACT ON OUR RELATIONS, WHICH, OF COURSE, ARE WIDE-RANGING AND HAVE BEEN ON UPSWING IN PAST COUPLE OF YEARS. GIVEN EXTREME FLUIDITY OF DIPLOMATIC SITUATION WE WOULD URGE U.S. CONTINUE ADHERE STRICT POLICY OF NEUTRALITY AT THIS POINT AND LET MOVES NOW UNDERWAY TAKE THEIR COURSE.  
COON

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## Message Attributes

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